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Dialogical Citizenship: Dancing Toward Solidarity

Joseph Camilleri

As the modern era rooted in nation-state sovereignty comes to an end, tensions between the plural and the universal, and the local and the cosmopolitan, present profound challenges to governance in the twenty-first century. Dialogical citizenship provides a framework for turning these dichotomies into fruitful exchanges among competing strains of citizenship while mediating stresses based on religion, ethnicity, race, and power inequalities. In such dialogue, there is a place for both difference and commonality, creating a space for a journey of self-discovery and discovery of "the other." Such soul-searching is the foundation for understanding across communities, faiths, and cultures in an increasingly tumultuous and divided world. Transnational citizenry that accepts—indeed, invites—dialogue to explore the creative tension between universality and singularity is a precondition to safely navigating a Great Transition.

An Epochal Moment

Ours is a unique moment in the human story. For over a century, representatives of diverse intellectual traditions have foreshadowed "the decline of the West," the "crisis of civilization," or "the end of history."[1] In the last several decades, a number of new labels have entered our lexicon, including post-war, post-colonial, post-industrial, post-Westphalian, post-modern, and now post-secular. The upheavals spanning the last century suggest that we are at the end of an era, though the shape of times to come remains at best blurred and uncertain. Two world wars, the Great Depression, the Holocaust, the advent of nuclear weapons, the Cold War, and—more recently—climate change (itself emblematic of a more pervasive ecological crisis), a series of financial crises, and transnational terrorism leave little doubt that we are going through a period of profound upheaval.

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How well equipped are we to navigate the turbulent seas ahead? In charting a path forward, we would do well to revisit the theory and practice of citizenship. This, of course, is no easy undertaking. Firstly, it is not simply a case of revisiting the past, but of rethinking the normative and cognitive assumptions underpinning our understanding of the past. Secondly, if it is to have traction, citizenship as both idea and practice must be recast to account for the radically altered conditions of life in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Thirdly, the functions and expressions of citizenship must be viewed in tandem with the wider normative and institutional responses to the epochal changes now under way. Finally, citizenship must find ways of harnessing the largely untapped resource offered by the dialogue of cultures, faiths, identities, and worldviews.

These four interlinked considerations inform the central argument in this essay: that dialogical citizenship—the structured discourse across diverse parties to explore diversity, pluralism, and truth—will be crucial to the viability of any strategy that seeks to address the challenges of epochal change in our time. Of these challenges, none is more daunting yet more critical to continued human adaptiveness than that of reconciling universalism and pluralism.

World in Transition

To make the case for a renewed conception of citizenship, we need to delineate the defining features of the current period of transition. This, in turn, requires us to characterize the era that is coming to an end. The early modern period, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century, conferred on modernity many of its distinguishing characteristics.[2] The European states system, the institutional centerpiece of modernity, had as its foundational principles state sovereignty, nationalism (more benignly expressed as national self-determination), empire building (premised on Western dominance of the non-Western world), the ever widening application of the scientific method, and capital accumulation. By the end of the modern era, these principles had become global in scope and inspiration.

Persuasive though it is, this reading of modernity must be situated within a larger evolutionary context. The more complex forms of technical and social organization that we associate with modernity are but the latest in a long line of steps that point toward steadily rising levels of complexity. Human history has been characterized by the increasingly elaborate application of consciousness to social organization, notably the developing array of cognitive, communication, and organizational skills that embody complex design and foresight. Situated within this wider evolutionary canvas, the current period of transition, unique though it is, can be fairly portrayed as the latest in a series of transitions or thresholds that have punctuated the trajectory of human evolution over the last 150,000 years.[3]

With each of these transitions, social formations became larger in size, acquired higher population densities, developed more hierarchical structures, and, in the process, made it possible and even necessary for new forms of individual identification and new senses of belonging to emerge. The growth of the modern state accentuated this tendency, giving rise to much higher levels of social complexity when compared to the tribal systems, chiefdoms, kingdoms, city-states, and even imperial states of earlier periods. The dense web of social and economic innovations we associate with the industrial revolution paved the way for substantial population growth, increasing urbanization, more functionally differentiated political systems, more centralized forms of government, more extensive legal codification, and more comprehensive taxation systems.

Encroaching limits have eroded the viability of modernity's intellectual and institutional foundations.

Evidence now suggests that the modern epoch may have reached its limits in relation to five factors critical to understanding the current transition: sovereignty, empire, national identity as a legitimizing norm of governance, growth, and science and technology.[4] Taken together, these limits have eroded the coherence and viability of modernity's intellectual and institutional foundations. The pace of economic change, speed of communication, and intensity of interconnection between human groups and activities—and between them and the global ecosystem—have had a profoundly corrosive effect on all boundary-maintaining systems, not least of which the nation-state.

Intimations and Impediments

In response to these challenges, the emerging pattern of governance, especially evident in its normative, legal, and institutional architecture, may be seen as initial, somewhat tentative attempts to reconceptualize time and space. Across virtually every area of policy, we can discern the same discursive shift towards universalist norms, including "universal human rights," "international citizenship," "health for all," the "global commons," and the "responsibility to protect." Notwithstanding periodic tensions and retreats in the interpretation and application of these principles, international discourse has adopted progressively more inclusive frameworks of decision-making, while scientists, lawyers, doctors, public intellectuals,

environmentalists, insurers, and public policy specialists have introduced longer time frames into their calculus of social and economic risk taking.

Mirroring and reinforcing these discursive tendencies is an expanding body of international law designed to prevent, or at least reduce, the destructive effects of modern warfare and trade rivalries. At the same time, development, diplomacy, human rights, public health, scientific and cultural relations, technology transfers, and financial and atmospheric flows have been subjected, at times cosmetically and often erratically, to some degree of international regulation. We can see an emerging consensus that interstate cooperation needs further codification, as well as an increasing acceptance of an international legal responsibility to protect vulnerable persons and minorities, regardless of location or nationality, as well as increasingly endangered ecosystems.

New institutional mechanisms are needed to manage the rapidly escalating intensity of cross-border flows.

Side by side with these attempts at normative and legal innovation has come the realization that new or reformed institutional mechanisms are needed to manage the rapidly escalating volume, speed, and intensity of cross-border flows. Over the past century, we have seen the exponential and continuing growth in the number, size, and functional reach of both regional and global institutions. Institutions such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, the UN Framework Conference on Climate Change, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals have all sought to devise responses that address the well-being of the human species as a whole and, at least in a preliminary way, of the global biosphere.

A great many actors operating in two other arenas, the market and civil society, are also playing a critical role in the construction of a multidimensional system of governance. Multinational corporations have been the driving force behind a number of international trade agreements as well as the creation of the World Trade Organization. More broadly, they have played a decisive role in the ascendancy of the neoliberal agenda which has largely set the tone and direction of economic policy by most Western governments. In civil society, scientific and professional networks have been influential in reshaping a number of policy debates, not least of which that around climate change. Religious movements and networks have been politically significant in conflict management, as well as conflict creation, in both domestic and international contexts. Development, health, and other relief agencies have become indispensable partners for governments and multilateral agencies in emergency preparedness and response. The nation-state continues to perform important law-making, administrative, and judicial functions, but within a multispatial framework in which public and private institutions collide and cooperate and in which municipal, provincial, national, regional, and global jurisdictions overlap and intersect.

In other words, the last several decades have been characterized by a tendency toward *holoreflexivity*, that is, a rising consciousness of the need to recast the temporal and spatial frame of reference to facilitate holistic diagnosis and management of

the rising volume, speed, and intensity of flows. However, this gradual development of holoreflexive capacities has to contend with a number of countertendencies. The virtual paralysis of international climate change negotiations over the last two decades and the self-defeating propensity toward great power military intervention exemplify this sway of entrenched interests and mindsets. Given the current patchwork of adaptive and maladaptive responses, societal and environmental breakdown of one kind or another remains a distinct possibility.

Why is the path to holoreflexivity strewn with such difficulty? There is no simple answer. However, three closely related impediments merit closer reflection: the lack of a coherent governance framework, the absence of a viable nexus between governance and citizenship, and the inability thus far to reconcile the competing demands of universality and plurality. At the core of all three impediments is the failure to reconceptualize the function and modalities of citizenship.

The overriding tendency in both discourse and practice has been to view the principles, mechanisms, and processes of governance largely within the confines of one or other of its main tiers (local, provincial, national, regional, and global). The question of how the different tiers of governance interact, or how policy formulation and implementation can be coordinated across these different tiers, has not received the attention it deserves. This is true as well for the critical question of how different players operating in different arenas—be it the states system, the market, or civil society—can engage in a sustained and productive dialogue.

Only a renewed conception of citizenship can offer a constructive way forward.

These shortcomings, theoretical as much as practical, are not unconnected to the second and third roadblocks. Part of the difficulty is that universalism has had to coexist with identity structures and symbolically potent attachments based on nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or ideology, attachments that are often exploited by vested economic, political, and military interests. Having developed in co-evolutionary ways during earlier stages of human evolution, these forms of identification and the sense of belonging they confer have served—and may still serve—an adaptive function. The normative and institutional innovations of the last several decades have yet to produce a viable relationship between universalism and pluralism. Only a renewed conception of citizenship can offer a constructive way forward.

The Governance-Citizenship Nexus

Though governance and citizenship are distinct concepts, they are closely related. A citizen has generally been defined as a member of a political community who enjoys the rights and assumes the obligations of membership.[5] According to most democratic theory and, to large extent, democratic practice, the participation of the citizen in the affairs of government is the essential condition of democratic governance.

While citizenship is now widely accepted as a core element of the Western democratic tradition, its meaning and function remain a subject of contention. Maximalist interpretations of democratic citizenship, which place the accent on active participation in the life of the community, have been questioned and often thwarted by minimalists who focus instead on "private" or "passive" citizenship.[6] In this latter formulation, the affairs of government are best left in the hands of a periodically elected elite, allowing citizens to concentrate on their individual rights and private interests. This latter interpretation is dominant in the United States, Canada, and Australia, as well as across Europe.

Critics of prevailing practice in the Western world, especially in the wake of the Great Depression, have argued that the formal recognition of rights is meaningless in the absence of appropriate political, social, and economic arrangements; effective checks and balances; unfettered dissemination of information and opinion; and universal access to the protection of the law. The development of the post-1945 welfare state was in part an attempt by political elites to reduce the force of this critique. The underlying strategy was to preserve social cohesion and political stability by limiting the potency of dissent from organized labor and social justice movements.

Can an idea rooted in the history of the territorially bound state still have relevance in the era of globalization?

In more recent years, the neoliberal ascendancy, with its emphasis on balancing budgets, reduced public spending, and deregulation, has significantly restricted the welfare state's room for maneuver.[7] But even in the heyday of the welfare state, citizenship continued to be a source of contention, with different conceptions of democratic politics offering strikingly different definitions of equality and weighing quite differently the importance of civil and political rights as against social and economic rights. The notion, advanced by Michael Walzer some thirty years ago, that distributive justice is best realized within a bounded political community, where "language, history and culture come together...to produce a collective consciousness," looks much less plausible today.[8] Indeed, the growing symptoms of income and wealth inequality coupled with growing signs of democratic decay in North America and Europe have given rise to unprecedented levels of public cynicism, periodic outbursts of discontent, and—more often than not—the politics of withdrawal.[9]

With the passage of time, additional doubts have surfaced regarding the prospects of democratic citizenship. Can an idea rooted in the history of the territorially bound state—be it the city-state, imperial state, feudal state, or nation-state—still have relevance in the era of globalization? How can the ethos of citizenship respond to the multiple crises of contemporary life? Is it feasible or even desirable to breathe new life into a concept that many identify with the particularist identities and allegiances of a bygone age?

These questions reflect the rapidly changing character of society, economy, and environment. The fundamental capacity of the state to exercise sovereignty is in question. According to John Urry, a British sociologist of complexity theory and social

change, globalization has brought forth a weakening of the power of the social and a corresponding development of a "post-national" citizenship. Increasingly the state as political and legal institution is buffeted by forces unleashed by three interconnected currents all of which lie beyond its effective control: transnational interconnectedness (hence the porosity of national boundaries), supranational fusion (which calls into question traditional notions of sovereignty), and subnational fission (which undermines national cohesion).[10]

As a consequence, the national state can no longer be considered the exclusive ordering principle in human governance or, for that matter, the exclusive form of cultural identification and political allegiance. The evidence from Spain to Scotland, to Northern Ireland, Belgium, Canada, France, and even the United States, not to mention Ukraine or the states of the former Yugoslavia, seems unmistakable. The expectation that all citizens— regardless of ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, or political background—will speak a "common national language," feel exclusive loyalty to national institutions, and commit themselves to maintaining the nation as a single, self-governing community into the indefinite future now seems a remote possibility.[11]

Citizenship will need to relate to a far more complex environment than that envisaged by classical democratic theory.

This reading of current trends does not nullify the centrality of citizenship to democratic governance or its role as agent for achieving a Great Transition. It does, however, suggest that, if it is to live up to its promise, citizenship, like governance, will need to relate to a far more complex environment than that envisaged by classical democratic theory. It will need to function in a multidimensional and variable mosaic of entitlements and obligations corresponding to multiple and shifting loyalties and forms of belonging.

Dialogical Citizenship

I have chosen to label this emerging form of citizenship "dialogical" rather than "post-national" or "global" because it conveys far more clearly and sharply what distinguishes it from pre-existing formulations of the concept. Dialogue offers the most promising bridge between the plural and the universal. If the individualistic, state-centric model of citizenship is in crisis, the cosmopolitan conception is but a small advance, for it retains the same individualistic approach. While cosmopolitan blueprints extend the rights and duties of citizenship to all human beings regardless of national boundaries, their emphasis still remains on the individual citizen as voter and claimant of political and civil rights, as a member of an atomized world.

Individualistic notions of citizenship, whether of the state-centric or cosmopolitan variety, are not particularly helpful when dealing with the complex realities of ethnic, racial, cultural, and civilizational difference. Collective solidarity in one form or another is becoming more rather than less important. A range of solidarities beyond nationalism have come to the fore to express rising levels of discontent, marginalization, or simply homelessness. Many find in religious, tribal, ethnic, racial, civilizational, and increasingly ecological solidarities more convivial ways of living in

time and space, or simply the promise of a new home. These identities operate as much across as within national boundaries.

As a result of the "deterritorialization" of identity, influenced heavily by the large-scale dispersal of peoples, most societies constitute a complex mosaic of overlapping communities, each of which retains a deep sense of belonging by virtue of a common ancestry, a collective history, or a shared social, cultural, or religious set of values and traditions. As a consequence, hybrid and interacting identities, fueled by globalizing currents that show no sign of abating, are giving rise to new and complex forms of pluralism both subnationally and transnationally. Against this backdrop, the inclusion of all remains a core element of democratic citizenship. But those to be included are not just or even primarily individuals understood as atomized globules of interest and desire, but as social persons who bring to the democratic table a range of identities and solidarities. In this context, citizenship has a dual function: to give expression to these identities and solidarities and to find mutually beneficial ways of negotiating differences between them.

Dialogical citizenship is well positioned to perform this dual function, for it offers a method of communication and interaction better suited to the management of diversity. This formulation is predicated on a particular understanding of the principles, contexts, and modes for governing the dialogical enterprise. Such an understanding reflects the accumulated wisdom of diverse intellectual traditions. In the recent period, significant contributors include Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Tu Weiming, and Fred Dallmayr, to name a few.[12] Equally noteworthy has been the contribution of visionary political leaders like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mohammad Khatami, and Václav Havel.

In dialogue, there is a place for both difference and commonality.

In dialogue, there is a place for both difference and commonality. Leaving aside the extremism of minority sects and fringe intellectual currents, the world's major ethical traditions, in their teachings though not always in their practice, share a deep sense of the dignity of human life, a commitment to human fulfilment, and a concern for standards of "rightness" in human conduct. Here, we can include not only Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and other world religions, but also, importantly, Confucianism, secular humanism, and the traditions of indigenous peoples. There is enough common ground between these ethical worldviews to make possible an ongoing conversation about ethics in general and social and ecological ethics in particular.[13]

At the same time, dialogue acknowledges the importance of difference. Each tradition has its own texts, distinctive ethos and symbolism, languages and customs, artistic and intellectual achievements, its own perspectives on ethical conduct, its own understanding of personal and social relationships. In a profound sense, diversity and commonality are not antithetical but complementary. Diversity is an integral part of the human inheritance. All human beings, regardless of their religious, cultural,

philosophical, or political loyalties, share the same civilizational inheritance. As the world's libraries, museums, and concert halls attest, humankind is the custodian of a remarkably rich and diverse inheritance, perhaps its greatest asset.

From Theory to Practice

How, then, is dialogical citizenship to deal with difference? How can it make effective use of our diverse inheritance? Citizens engage in dialogue not merely to recognize or tolerate cultural, religious, or political difference, but to engage with others in a common search for truth and mutual understanding. They approach dialogue in a spirit of humility, acknowledging that no community, culture, religion, or society has a monopoly on truth or wisdom.

To engage in such dialogue requires that citizens speak and, just as importantly, that they listen. As former Iranian President Khatami explained in his celebrated address to the University of Florence, "[u]nderstanding is the result of speaking and listening.…'Speaking' and 'listening' are a two-dimensional effort aimed at coming closer to the truth."[14] Dialogue, then, is an encounter across cultural, religious, philosophical, ethical or civilizational boundaries in which one citizen listens to the other, becomes open, sensitive, even vulnerable to the other's perspectives, concerns, and grievances. Through dialogue, citizens embark on a journey as much of "self-discovery" as of "discovery of the other."

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It follows that, in dialogue, citizens are ready to hold their respective traditions and political preferences up to critical examination, to rediscover the fundamental ethical impulse which sustains their worldview, and to consider ways of adapting it to the new circumstances of our epoch. Dialogue works best when it fosters profound soul-searching, however painful it may be, within as much as between communities, faiths, cultures, and civilizations.

Dialogue is nowhere more demanding than in situations of conflict or tension. Whether in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Muslim-Western divide, or any of the other deeply divisive conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East, parts of Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, or Korea, dialogue must summon the mental and emotional energies needed to show empathy and compassion for the "other." Long-held fears and animosities must be revisited. If dialogue is to foster reconciliation, citizens across various divides need to share their narratives, listen to one another's experience of pain, acknowledge past wrongs, and accept collective responsibility for righting the wrongs of the past.

Such dialogue can prove immensely valuable in diverse settings, but three are worth singling out: situations where communities have been subjected to longstanding oppression or marginalization by dominant majorities or minorities; troubled relationships between the West and the non-West, whose far-reaching and often poorly understood consequences are still with us; and policy debates in relation to

the multifaceted ecological crisis that now strains every level of governance. It is in these highly contested contexts that dialogical citizenship can make its most telling contribution. In both formal and informal settings, dialogue enables existing entitlements and obligations to be reviewed and an appropriate balance to be struck between risk taking and risk avoidance.

Assuming we can agree on the virtues of dialogical citizenship, a large question still remains: How do we move from philosophical and social theoretical abstraction to concrete engagement? To translate theory into practice requires us to pose three critical questions. First, how is dialogue to be approached, that is, what are the most promising methodologies? Second, who are the agents and participants of dialogue? Third, what are the sites where such dialogue can occur, and what are the key points of coordination between multiple sites?

Jürgen Habermas, who perhaps more than any other contemporary thinker has directly addressed this methodological problem, has proposed the full participation of minority cultures in the political life of the nation and civil society more generally. His approach is to embrace the "plurality of voices" while affirming the "unity of reason."[15] Reason becomes the universal language of dialogue accompanied by a commitment to agreed procedures for the conduct of the dialogue. Other exponents of dialogue have taken issue with the Habermasian conception of reason as the lingua franca of dialogue, depicting dialogue as a vehicle as much for the sharing of life experiences as for rational argument. This more holistic view embraces the dialogue of arguments but also the dialogue of emotions, the dialogue of analysis but also the dialogue of engagement.[16]

Dialogical citizenship offers a place for both individual and collective agency.

At one level, the question of participation is more easily answered. In principle, one can say that all citizens are called upon to exercise dialogical citizenship. However, there is more to inclusion than universal participation if this only means the participation of citizens in their individual capacities. Dialogical citizenship offers a place for both individual and collective agency. In the process of dialogue, various groupings bring to the table the perspectives, experiences, perceptions, grievances, and aspirations of their respective cultures, faiths, communities, identities, and solidarities. Every group that is actually or potentially affected by a project, decision, or policy thereby becomes a stakeholder whose voice must be heard.

Of course, difficult questions arise as to who may legitimately speak for Russophone Ukrainians, Egyptian Copts, Palestinians, Kurds in Turkey, or Tamils in Sri Lanka, let alone for Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or, more broadly, the biosphere. Dialogue involves more than an exchange between two clearly identifiable groups: it is often especially useful within groups and movements—within faith traditions, within Islam or Christianity, within the Sunni and Shia traditions, within the environmental and human rights movements.

The issue of participation prompts another important consideration. Citizenship carries obligations as well as entitlements. Many in society have particular responsibilities by virtue of their professional competence and expertise, or the intellectual, moral, or material influence they exercise. In other words, these citizens are called upon to use their privileged positions to promote and facilitate dialogical approaches to problem-solving, especially in conditions of tension or conflict. If dialogue is as much about listening as it is about speaking, then public officials, industrialists, financiers, lawyers, doctors, architects, town planners, and religious and community leaders have an obligation to listen and give voice to those whose voices are less easily heard. A similar but distinctive responsibility rests with philosophers, religious scholars, and intellectuals—as well as poets, artists, and publicists—to shed light on the nature and magnitude of the contemporary predicament, to suggest possible remedies and ways to facilitate and enrich the ensuing dialogue.

The potency of dialogical engagement lies in the ability to connect that which would otherwise remain fragmented.

This brings us to our third question: Where can the citizen engage in dialogue? The simple answer is to say "anywhere and everywhere," but such an unstructured response risks becoming meaningless. In its traditional conception, democratic citizenship is exercised first and foremost on the national stage, primarily through elections, and, for those of more active disposition, through participation in political parties and various forms of advocacy. But decisions of interest to the citizen now range across every tier of governance: municipal, provincial, national, regional, and global. It should therefore be possible for citizens to engage in dialogue with respect to the deliberations and decisions pertaining to each tier of governance. The institutional infrastructure within and across tiers must be designed and equipped to facilitate, resource, and connect with the dialogical engagement of citizens.

But this is not enough. Given the preeminent role of the market in allocating resources and in shaping economic activity generally, citizenship requires engagement with corporate centers of decision-making. This, in turn, requires jurisdictions at various levels to establish a regulatory framework that makes for dialogical interaction between corporate institutions and stakeholders affected by their decisions, thereby offsetting or at least constraining the asymmetries of wealth and power.

Quite apart from the sites themselves, which are both numerous and diverse, is the complex issue of their interconnection. If citizens are to relate to the different tiers of governance and at the same time take advantage of opportunities for engagement in civil society and for fruitful dialogue with the business sector, ways must be found to devise sustainable connections between the different sites of engagement. Otherwise, citizens may find the experience disorienting and ultimately dispiriting. The potency of dialogical engagement lies precisely in the ability to connect that which would otherwise remain fragmented. In the coming decades, significant thought and technical innovation, not least in the forms of communication, will need to go into making the citizenship experience whole. But dialogue, we should remember, is not first and foremost a technical or organizational challenge, but an intellectual and

experiential one.

Prospect and Promise

The new model of citizenship will not materialize overnight. No technical fix or social engineering can bring it to fruition. The dialogical model reaches beyond the instrumental to embrace a temperamental and attitudinal shift through which mutual empathy is nourished and differences embraced. Even if it is to engage only a sizeable minority in this journey—say between ten and fifteen percent of the world's population—a major cultural shift will be necessary, and education will be integral to this transformative process. Formal institutions, from kindergartens to universities, will play a critical role, but they will need to be complemented by less formal programs that connect with ongoing technological, socio-economic, political, and environmental changes. Beyond this, the very purpose of education will have to be rethought. The opportunities offered by dialogical discourse and practice in the context of a Great Transition will need to inform the reworking of curriculum and learning materials as well as the reform of teacher education. Effective implementation will require sustained policy support from all tiers of governance; pedagogical guidance from educators, intellectuals, artists, and practitioners; and innovative use of both traditional and social media.

The teaching-learning process will need to be cross-national, cross-cultural, and planetary in scope and inspiration.

Both the content and method of the teaching-learning process will need to be cross-national, cross-cultural, and planetary in scope and inspiration. A priority for the new pedagogy will be the fostering of formal and informal dialogical encounters among educators and students and between them, parents, and the wider community. By inspiring and legitimizing innovative approaches to dialogue and conflict resolution, leadership in the religious, political, and artistic domains can play a critical role in ensuring the success of this endeavor.

As the challenges posed by the current transitional period reach a climactic stage in coming decades, the progress of dialogical citizenship will significantly bear on the outcome. The conceptual and practical development of this new citizenship model must nevertheless be approached with a healthy dose of realism. The task is dauntingly complex, the terrain will not always be fertile, and the level of inertia and at times outright resistance in political, bureaucratic, and corporate circles will be far from negligible. Yet it is difficult to imagine us safely navigating the Great Transition in the absence of a transnational citizenry that is conscious of the tension between singularity and plurality, and willing to explore the potential of dialogue to reconcile these conflicting tendencies.

Endnotes

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About the Author

Joseph Camilleri is Emeritus Professor at La Trobe University, Melbourne, where he held the Chair in International Relations and was founding Director of the Centre for Dialogue. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences, chair of the Editorial Committee of the scholarly journal *Global Change, Peace and Security*, and adviser to Ideapod, a web-based platform aimed at harnessing the power of ideas. His recent publications include *The UN Alliance of Civilizations in Asia-South Pacific: Current Context and Future Pathways*, *Culture, Religion and Conflict in Muslim Southeast Asia*, and *Religion and Ethics in a Globalizing World: Conflict, Dialogue and Transformation*. He has convened several international dialogues and conferences on global governance and conflict resolution.

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